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AUTHOR Richards, Margaret

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ABSTRACT

This program is intended for easy incorporation into curricula on U.S. history, state and local government, or contemporary issues and events. The objective is for high school students to gain direct exposure to the workings of the Connecticut state legislature and the decision-making process. The teacher's manual contains an introduction, a guide for teachers, and seven sections, including: (1) "Introduction to the Connecticut General Assembly"; (2) "Getting Elected to be a Lawmaker"; (3) "Organizing for the Business of Lawmaking"; (4) "The Process of Lawmaking"; (5) "Do You Think There Ought to be a Law?"; (6) "Exploring Careers at the General Assembly"; and (7) "A Final Word: Senator Kevin Sullivan." (EH)

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THE STATE CAPITOL

THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Teacher's Manual for Visitation Program

of the

Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education, Inc.

SO 028 509

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Author
LEGISLATIVE VISITATION MANUAL
Margaret Richards

Program Director
Connecticut Legislative Visitation
Joani K. Byer

Editorial Assistance
Margaret Schmidt
Veronica Rose, Office of Legislative Research

Secretarial Assistance
Michele Provencal Mader

Program Steering Committee

Joani K. Byer, William H. Hall High School
Dr. Christopher Collier, State Historian
Jill Cromwell, CIT Director, League of Women Voters
Representative Denise W. Merrill, 54th District
David Ogle, Executive Director, Office of Legislative Management
Margaret Richards, Curriculum Consultant
Dr. James Schmidt, Executive Director, CCLCE, Inc.
Senator Kevin B. Sullivan, 5th District

Dear Colleague:

The mission of the Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education, Inc., is to provide resources to help Connecticut teachers and their students understand the law and the rights and responsibilities of a citizen. This Teacher's Manual is another in a series of those resources that engage students through participation.

Conceived over ten years ago by members of its Board of Directors to be a complement to its Court Visitation Program, this Legislative Visitation Program involves five phases:

- A Legislator in the Classroom activity to help students understand the issues which will come before the General Assembly in the next legislative session
- A student research project on one or more issues which are of interest to the class
- A classroom unit on the workings of the General Assembly, to which this Manual is directed
- A visit to the General Assembly when it is in session to view the legislative process "for real" and to share student research with their legislator(s)
- A mock legislature in the classroom following their field trip

Naturally, this project is the work of many dedicated individuals who gave so generously of their time to write, edit, field test and assist us in putting it together.

Margaret Richards, our curriculum consultant, spent many hours ferreting out resources to help teach about the legislative process in Connecticut. We would also like to thank Veronica Rose of the Office of Legislative Research and Jill Cromwell of the League of Women Voters for their valuable assistance to Margaret. Several legislators participated in the project with us and helped in editing the Manual, especially Rep. Denise Merrill and Rep. Richard Ferrari. The teachers who piloted it the first year lent valuable assistance in telling us what worked well in the classroom and what needed revision.

We are especially indebted to Mr. David Ogle, Executive Director of the Office of Legislative Management, for his help in moving our ideas from the drawing board to the final product. Without his expertise and guidance, this cooperative effort would still be in the discussion stage.

It was only with the assistance of the Connecticut Humanities Council that this project got off the ground. They provided us with the financial resources to prepare this Manual and field test it in schools around the state.

It is hoped that with this Teacher's Manual, students will better understand the dynamic and interesting process that making laws in Connecticut has always been and continues to be. The performance-based activities envisioned in this program are the way the Consortium believes students learn best about the difficult job of making good laws.

For additional copies of this Manual or help with implementing the other activities in this project, please contact the Program office at 30 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or call 566-3904.

Sincerely,

Joani K. Byer

Joani K. Byer
Project Manager

State of Connecticut

JOINT COMMITTEE ON
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591
PHONE (203) 240-0100

FOREWORD

For more than three hundred and fifty years -- from the Fundamental Orders of 1639 to the current Constitution of 1965 -- citizen participation in representative government has been the cornerstone of Connecticut's governmental and political processes.

It is through participation in government and politics that citizens can best acquire knowledge and information about the varied and complex issues that face our state and nation, and about the intricacies of democracy which Winston Churchill described as "the worst form of government except for all the others that have been tried from time to time."

Despite Connecticut's long-standing tradition and commitment to the principle of participatory democracy, the vast majority of our state's citizens pass through adolescence and into adulthood with little or no direct exposure to or contact with their representatives who serve them in the halls of the State Capitol.

The Legislative Visitation Program, designed, developed and sponsored by the Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education, offers our state's high school students -- Connecticut's leaders of tomorrow -- an opportunity for direct exposure to and involvement in the exciting, fascinating and sometimes frustrating activities and decision-making processes of their state legislature. The program is intended for easy incorporation into curricula on American history, state and local government, or contemporary issues and events. The enhanced understanding that program participants will acquire of their governmental system through direct contact with their elected and appointed representatives, and through the opportunity to closely observe laws being made, will surely enable them to better prepare for the transition to higher education and the responsibilities of adulthood in a free society.

While this *Teacher's Manual* for the Legislative Visitation Program is the product of many hours of work by countless volunteers, four individuals are deserving of special mention for their yeoman efforts. Joani Byer of William T. Hall High School in West Hartford, project

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director for the program, has never ceased in pursuit of her dream to make the program a reality. Margaret Richards put in more hours than anyone could possibly imagine in preparing this manual. State Representative Denise Wright Merrill, who formerly served as the Consortium's executive director and edited the teacher's guide on "350 Years of Connecticut Government," continues to provide strong support for the program and for the Consortium in her elected capacity. Finally, Dr. James Schmidt, Executive Director of the Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education, has been the glue that has held everything together. The people of Connecticut owe a debt of gratitude to these four individuals for their unstinting commitment to and faith in our state's future -- its young people.

David B. Ogle
Executive Director
Joint Committee on Legislative Management

LEGISLATIVE VISITATION MANUAL
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THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW... UNIT
Grades 7 - 12 Minimum - 2 weeks

Guide for Teachers

This material on lawmaking in Connecticut may be incorporated into curriculum on U.S. history, contemporary issues or state and local government.

Obectives: Through experiences which use participatory, cooperative and reality-based learning strategies, students will:

1. improve critical thinking skills (see CTS Process Model following);

2. increase their understanding of the lawmaking procedures used by the Connecticut General Assembly; and

3. develop practical action skills for citizenship through observing and modeling the lawmaking process in Connecticut. The skills will include:

    - identifying and defining a problem of significant public concern;
    - considering the advantages and disadvantages of solving a problem through the legislative process;
    - using a variety of community resources to gather information, opinions and perspectives on public issues;
    - interviewing, questioning, listening, explaining, persuading, advocating;
    - supporting and leading other people;
    - negotiating, mediating, compromising and making decisions.

UNASSESSED INFORMATION

From
School, Home, Community, Books
Magazines, TV, Newspapers, Maps, Etc.

Basic Skills

Interpret maps, charts, graphs, timelines, and other symbolic materials; locate and select information using appropriate reference materials; organize information into categories, and understand history--social science vocabulary.

Critical Thinking Skills *

I. DEFINING AND CLARIFYING THE PROBLEM

A. Identify central issues or problems.
B. Compare similarities and differences.
C. Determine which information is relevant.
D. Formulate appropriate questions.
E. Express problems clearly and concisely.

II. JUDGING INFORMATION RELATED TO THE PROBLEM

A. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment.
B. Check consistency.
C. Identify unstated assumptions.
D. Recognize stereotypes and cliches.
E. Recognize bias, emotional factors, propaganda, and semantic slanting.
F. Recognize value orientations and ideologies.

III. SOLVING PROBLEMS / DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

A. Recognize the adequacy of data.
B. Identify reasonable alternatives.
C. Test conclusions or hypotheses.
D. Predict probable consequences.

Process Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the above process are students who can:

- Assess information around them, define problems, weigh evidence, and draw conclusions.
- Participate effectively as citizens in a representative democracy.
- Defend and justify intellectual and personal values, present and critique arguments, and appreciate the viewpoints of others.

*Underlined skills are assessed in the objective portion of the statewide test.

CTS PROCESS MODEL

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Suggested Unit Plan

Introductory discussion and activity

Introduce:	Concept of need for laws through participatory activity such as the Island Game.
Discussion:	Can all problems be solved by a law? What are other ways? What are advantages of legal solutions? What are disadvantages?
Historical perspectives:	What have been sources of authority to make laws and compel people to obey them? Where does the Connecticut General Assembly get its authority to make laws for the state?

Organize the class as a model General Assembly

- Have students identify up to four problems which are of concern to them and their community and which are related to an issue coming before the current session of the General Assembly. (See Appendices A and E)

- Divide the class into subcommittees, one for each problem. Ask each subcommittee to divide into representatives of the major political parties in Connecticut.

- Have each subcommittee research solutions to its problem by:

    - interviewing interest groups, lobbyists, local legislators and other resource people (See Appendices A and B);

    - tracking the problem and the solutions suggested through the media;

    - gathering relevant data from statistical information, position papers, statements about costs and funds available, etc.

- Have members of the political parties on each subcommittee caucus and develop a legislative proposal addressing the problem. At this point there may be majority and minority proposals.

- Hold a preliminary hearing before the whole class for reports by each subcommittee on problems researched and solutions proposed.

Prepare for the students to visit the General Assembly

- **Arrangements must be made in advance through the Connecticut Consortium for Law & Citizenship Education, Inc. For information and reservation form, please call 566-3904.**

- In class familiarize students with the steps for lawmaking. (See Teaching Tools in *MANUAL*: Chart on p.31, "Seven Steps in the Lawmaking Process" on p. 32 and Tracking A Bill on p. 33)

- Teach students basic terms used by legislators. A separate glossary of terms has not been included in this *MANUAL*. Most texts on state government have one, and the *HANDBOOK OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS AND ACRONYMNS, 1995,* explains those used most frequently in the General Assembly. Instead, the *MANUAL* has terms students should know placed in the text to show how they apply. They are underlined and their use is explained briefly. We encourage you to make sure students understand them and how they are used in lawmaking procedures.

Connecticut General Assembly Visitation

Depending on schedules, students may

- attend a committee hearing;
- observe the House and Senate in session;
- tour the State Capitol with a League of Women Voters Guide;
- tour technical support offices in the Legislative Office Building, such as the Library, the Bill Room, the Press Room, the Lobbyists' Room;
- meet with legislators, lobbyists, or other resource people and present their legislative proposals, with opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues.

Discuss with the students which of the above they wish to do, and be as specific as possible on your reservation form. If your local legislator(s) will meet with your students, or students wish to talk with a particular resource person, please note that on your form.

A word of caution for your Visit at the General Assembly:

Even when arrangements have been made in advance for your activities there, schedules of legislators, staff and lobbyists are very tight and subject to last minute changes. Please prepare your students to be courteous, patient and flexible.

Follow-up activities in the classroom

- Taking into consideration what was learned during the visit to the General Assembly, each subcommittee will review the problem it has researched.

  The representatives of the political parties on a subcommittee will then:

  - discuss the legislative proposals the party representatives have developed and amend them by negotiating and voting;
  - draft a bill on which a majority of the subcommittee can agree.

- The culminating activity will be hearings before the whole class acting as a model General Assembly. The group may be divided into a House and a Senate. Students should continue with the party affiliation they represented in their subcommittee.

Each subcommittee will present

- a description of the problem considered;
- the legislative solution drafted;
- their reasons for their proposed bill.

The class (acting as the General Assembly) may

- ask questions for clarification (limited time);
- recommend amendments or refinement of the language in the draft bill;
- vote to pass, reject, or return the bill to the subcommittee;
- explain reasons for the disposition of the bill.

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STUDY GUIDES FROM OTHER STATES

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN MICHIGAN, the Michigan Legislative Service Bureau, Legislative Research Division, Research Report - Volume 11, No. 1, Revised April, 1993.

PEOPLE AND THE PROCESS: A LEGISLATIVE STUDY GUIDE, Public Information Office, Minnesota House of Representatives, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1991.

National Field Test Project: ***THE AMERICAN YOUTH CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO PROJECT***, Teacher's Guide, Developed and Administered by the Center for Civic Education, Calabasas, California, 1994.

Through the office of the Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education you may obtain a number of additional materials for teaching about state government and the Connecticut General Assembly. These include:

350 YEARS OF CONNECTICUT GOVERNMENT: A Search for the Common Good

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (50-minute video)

CRUSADERS AND CRIMINALS, VICTIMS AND VISIONARIES
with Teacher's Guide

DOCUMENTS OF CONNECTICUT GOVERNMENT:
The Connecticut Constitution and its Antecedents

THE CONNECTICUT COURT VISITATION MANUAL and NOTES ON SENTENCING

1993 CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES

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At the Legislative Office Building you may obtain a number of free publications.

Publications of the General Assembly, Office of Legislative Management, include:

CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE GUIDE, 1995

RULES AND PRECEDENTS of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of CONNECTICUT, 1995

HANDBOOK OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS AND ACRONYMNS, 1995

COMMITTEE STAFF MANUAL

SUMMARY OF 1995 PUBLIC ACTS

Publications of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut include:

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF THE STATE CAPITOL

CONNECTICUT, A GUIDE TO STATE GOVERNMENT

VOTING IN CONNECTICUT

I. THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY: OVERVIEW OF PAST AND PRESENT

Although every state in the U.S.A. has a legislature whose function is lawmaking, the Connecticut General Assembly is one of the oldest. It began in 1637, about three years after three small groups of Puritans from Massachusetts started to settle in the valley along the Connecticut River. Each group was a church congregation, and the members built the settlements of Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor around their church. Needing to defend the settlements and to "establish an orderly and decent society together," in 1637 the landowners in each town chose four men to represent them at meetings where common problems could be discussed and plans for meeting their common needs could be made. During one of their sessions in 1638, they drew up The Fundamental Orders, which was the set of rules by which each town would elect its representatives and work together for common purposes. The Orders are sometimes called "the first constitution" because it was a plan for a government drawn up by representatives of people in the three towns, which agreed to follow it.

Following The Fundamental Orders, beginning in 1639, representatives of each town in the Colony met in April and September as the General Court for the colony. The members carried out all the functions of our three branches of government. They debated, wrote and passed laws for the colony as a legislature; they enforced the laws as an executive; and they decided both civil and criminal cases as a judiciary. When necessity demanded, they even acted as a foreign relations and military department, negotiating with other colonies, fighting wars with Indian tribes, and using diplomatic channels to protest "invasions" of their land by foreign powers.

As new towns were settled in the colony, they were incorporated by the General Court. Then the landowners were given permission, or certified, to elect their representatives and send them to the meetings in April and September. Each town was allowed to elect four as the original three towns did. The towns also were required by The Fundamental Orders to hold a special, separate election annually for a governor and six magistrates, all of whom were members of the General Court. Those men, however, had no independent powers; they functioned as leaders at the meetings and by carrying out any actions voted by the General Court.

Changes in those traditions and laws came slowly, but three major areas of transition to the modern General Assembly can be traced:

- organization of the legislature into two houses, development of permanent committees and establishment of a technical support system;

- separation of powers into three co-equal branches of government;

- apportionment of representation by population.

The following are brief timelines showing the major developments in each area.

- **Organization of the General Assembly**

A bicameral legislature

1698 The General Court voted to re-name itself The General Assembly and to divide itself into two "chambers." The larger of the two consisted of representatives of the towns and was called the "lower chamber;" the second, or "upper chamber," consisted of the governor and the magistrates (now called assistants), all of whom still had to be elected members of the Assembly.

1818 The new State Constitution divided the powers of government into three "separate and distinct" branches. The power to make laws for Connecticut was given to the General Assembly as the legislative branch, but the powers it had used to carry out the laws were explicitly given to the executive branch, and its functions as a court were given to the judicial branch.

The General Assembly continued to have two chambers. When the governor and assistants became the separate executive branch, the upper chamber became the Senate. Its twelve members were elected at large, statewide, by special town meetings. The lower chamber was called the House of Representatives. Its members were the delegates from each town, elected annually in regular town meetings.

1828, 1836 The first and second amendments to the 1818 Constitution divided the state into 18-24 Senatorial Districts, with one senator elected by the landowners in each. At first the districts were roughly equal in population and, applying that principle of apportionment, the Assembly redrew the district lines in 1881, 1903 and 1941 to accommodate growth.

However, neither the 1818 Constitution nor amendments to it changed representation by town in the House of Representatives. Each established town sent two delegates regardless of its size or population. Each new town sent one. This system lasted until the 1965 Constitution. See p.13-14 to track those changes.

1965 The State Constitution established the number of Senators at not less than 30 nor more than 50, and the number of Representatives at not less than 125 nor more than 225. All are elected in districts apportioned by population.

Committee structure

Under The Fundamental Orders there was no provision for regular committees to do the work of the Assembly. When special matters needed attention, ad hoc committees did the necessary tasks, made their recommendations or reports to the full Assembly and dissolved. The Assembly would then act as a Committee of the Whole.

1818 The Constitution made no mention of committees in the House or the Senate. As state matters became more complicated, however, especially during the Civil War and period of rapid industrialization which followed it, more committees were organized to meet regularly to respond to ongoing needs. Sometimes members served for only one session, but other times a member would continue on a committee for as long as he was in the Assembly.

1965 The Constitution also makes no provision for committees. As in 1818, the House and the Senate have the responsibility for organizing themselves to get their work done. The committee structure became increasingly unwieldy and inefficient, however, partly because the number of delegates in the House of Representatives grew larger and larger as the number of towns, each of which sent one or two delegates, increased. At its peak there were 294 members in the House. In addition, because of problems caused by the Depression, urbanization, immigration and World War II, the committees became numerous and complicated to organize, and the work of the Assembly could not be done effectively.

The present system of Joint Standing Committees, which include members of both the House and the Senate, has been worked out since the 1965 Constitution apportioned both chambers on the basis of population, and Amendment III (1970) provided for one long and one short regular session in each two-year term. For the responsibilities of each committee and the members serving on each one, see Appendix A. For the complex rules the committees follow, see Rules and Precedents of the General Assembly of Connecticut, 1995.

Technical Staff

1967 Beginning in 1967 the General Assembly passed a series of statutes to set up the Offices of Legislative Management, Fiscal Analysis, and Legislative Research. With full-time, qualified staff paid by the Assembly, those Offices, and others added since, provide specialized expertise to the members of the Assembly. The support services have greatly increased the efficiency and professionalism of the Assembly.

Legislative Office Building

1989 This handsome facility was dedicated on the 350th Anniversary of the Fundamental Orders. It has provided the General Assembly with superb meeting rooms and offices and makes accessible to the legislators and the general public all the conveniences of modern technology for lawmaking.

- Separation into 3 co-equal branches of government

1818 The 1818 Constitution began this change. Both it and the 1965 Constitution clearly divided the powers of state government in the same way the U.S. Constitution divides powers at the federal level. The functions of each branch are explicitly listed in both constitutions under Article III - Legislative, Article IV - Executive, Article V - Judicial. After the 1818 Constitution was ratified, however, it took a long time for each branch to establish procedures for carrying out its own functions and for checking the actions of the other two branches. The General Assembly continued to be the most powerful branch well into the 20th century.

1897 The first challenge to powers being exercised by the Assembly came from the judicial branch in the Norwalk Street Railway's Appeal. Up until 1897 the Assembly continued to decide some cases of pardons (an executive power according to the 1818 Constitution) and some divorce and bankruptcy cases (a judicial function). Those practices, for so long the prerogatives of the Assembly, were explicitly denounced in Judge William Hammersley's decision when he reminded the Assembly that the 1818 Constitution explicitly limited its powers to those belonging to a legislative branch.

Relations between the General Assembly and the executive branch have reflected changing trends of both politics and power. Some steps by which the present balance has been developed are:

1818 Governors were elected for a one-year term. The Constitution gave governors the power to veto a bill, but the Assembly could make it into law over their veto by a simple majority.

1886 The Constitution was amended to provide a two-year term for the governor.

1924 Governors were given the power to veto line items in appropriations bills.

1930's & 1940's Because of problems brought on by the Depression and World War II, the governors developed larger staffs, more administrative agencies, and more active direct access to federal dollars and programs than the legislative branch. Therefore, the executive branch responded more effectively to people's needs than the General Assembly did.

1947	A constitutional amendment provided for a four-year term for the office of governor beginning with the 1950 election.
1965	The Constitution required a 2/3 majority in both chambers to overide a governor's veto.
1966 & 1969	Statutes establishing technical offices and support staff for the Assembly helped to equalize power with the executive branch which had continued to extended its network of departments, administrative agencies and staff.
1970	Constitutional amendments provided for the present schedule of the annual sessions of the Assembly.
1972	The Assembly further strengthened its capacity for overseeing the executive branch by a statute which established the Program Review and Investigations Committee.

- Apportionment of representation by population

In both The Fundamental Orders and the 1818 Constitution the lower house was apportioned by town. As noted, at first each town sent four representatives. By the latter part of the 18th century, however, there were nearly 100 towns, making the meetings of the House of Representatives nearly unmanageable. Therefore, the Assembly, in a series of laws which became part of the 1818 Constitution, reduced the number of delegates from each established town to two, and to one from each new town. With some modifications, that system of representation in the House by town, without regard to the number of residents, lasted until 1965.

It was increasingly unfair as the forces of urbanization, industrialization and immigration changed Connecticut towns. For example, in 1850 New Haven with a population of 22,582 sent two delegates; Hartland with a population of 848 also sent two. By 1900 New Haven had a population of 108,027 but still sent two delegates; Union with a population of 428 also sent two delegates.

Representation by population in the Senate was started in 1828 by an amendment to the 1818 Constitution, which divided the state into senatorial districts, each electing one senator. Even with redistricting in 1881, 1903 and 1941, however, there was a wide variation in the number of voters included in each district. There was no system for making the count approximately equal, nor for a regular redistricting as population figures changed.

In 1964 the U. S. Supreme Court in the case of Wesberry v. Sanders set the one man-one vote standard for all state legislatures; and the Federal District Court in the case of Butterworth v. Dempsey ordered the Connecticut General Assembly to apply that standard to the election of state representatives and senators. To comply with that decision the Assembly ordered a Constitutional Convention which wrote the 1965

Constitution. It copied the 1818 Constitution in most respects, but it replaced the system of representation by town with apportionment on the basis of population in both the Senate and the House by setting up districts in which the number of people met the federal standard for equal representation.

Now there are 36 senators, each one elected in a district with approximately 84,000 constituents (or people), and 151 representatives, each elected in a district with approximately 20,000. The population count is taken by the U.S. Census every ten years (as required by the U.S. Constitution). At that time the district lines must be adjusted if necessary to meet the equal vote standard. Connecticut's district lines now reflect the 1990 figures. See district maps in Appendix B.

In summary, in the years from the General Court of The Fundamental Orders to the present General Assembly, Connecticut has developed an effective legislative branch. It has powers and organization that make it co-equal with the executive and the judicial branches and because of the way it is apportioned, each voter has a fair and equal voice in the laws it passes for the health, safety and welfare of all people in the state. It is a bicameral legislature that represents a broad range of needs and interests. Its members are part-time and they usually work at other jobs; but by the Constitution they must live in the district they represent. Each one is elected for two years; and they meet at the State Capitol every year on a biennial (two year) cycle. In odd-numbered years the Assembly meets for the "long session" starting in January and ending in June. In even-numbered years the "short session" begins in February and ends in May. In addition, as part of the balance of power with the executive branch, the General Assembly may be called into a special session by the governor or by a majority vote of the legislators. At that session, however, it may meet only for a specified purpose and then must adjourn.

The Modern General Assembly has three major responsibilities.

1. Lawmaking

The legislators consider thousands of proposals for laws at every session and make decisions on them that affect everyone in the state. For example, they decide how many days students must be in school, who is certified to teach, when a person may drive a car, or at what age a young person may work, as well as the conditions at the workplace. They are responsible for laws to protect the health, safety and welfare of all the state's residents.

Lawmakers are also responsible for paying the state's bills. They must vote to levy taxes, which currently include the income tax, sales tax and taxes on businesses. They also raise money by imposing fees such as those for liquor licenses, use of state recreational facilities, and driver licenses. Then they must allocate the money collected to pay for public institutions (schools, jails and courts), programs (services to the elderly, income maintenance, and Medicaid), and the costs of government (salaries of state officials, expenses of the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and maintenance of state buildings).

The special bills which allocate money raised through taxes are called appropriations. They authorize various agencies and units of government to spend tax monies for a specific purpose. Legislators must carefully consider such government expenses before proposing any programs, services or building projects. They are "costed out" by budget analysts in both the executive and legislative branches and are fully debated by the Appropriations and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committees, which will make recommendations to the General Assembly. In 1994 the Appropriations Committee set up a total budget of $9,501.2 million which was approved by the General Assembly (see Appendix D for sources of revenue and appropriations by government function).

To accomplish their lawmaking responsibilities, legislators must not only represent the interests and views of their own constituents; they also listen to the interests and views of members in the General Assembly who come from other districts with constituents that may have very different needs and views. Connecticut is a mosaic of urban, suburban and rural areas, with agricultural, industrial, educational, commercial and financial interests, diverse populations, and widely different economic levels.

It is one matter to speak for one's own district. It is another to be ready to discuss, negotiate and work out compromises with many other legislators and to pass laws that "have something for everyone" yet protect the common good. Success at lawmaking requires a wide range of essential skills and a commitment to make state government vital and responsive through democratic methods.

2. Oversight

In carrying out its oversight responsibilities the legislators contribute to the checks and balances system among the three branches of government. The General Assembly is not only a "watchdog" over how public money is spent; it also oversees the actions of the executive branch to ensure that laws are being implemented (carried out) as intended, and it watches the procedures and decisions of the state courts (the judicial branch) to ensure that laws are properly enforced.

For their part as lawmakers in the system, members work hard at their responsibilities to:

- represent the people of the state as they fashion laws they believe are in the best interest of all. In that role they are the guardians of "the common good;"

- listen to complaints about unmet needs and problems; and

- review reports, court cases, newspapers and letters from constituents to see how laws are, or are not working.

As they exercise those responsibilities, legislators work out ideas for changing or amending laws, as well as for introducing new ones to meet new problems.

3. Giving information and assistance to constituents

Finally, it is a major responsibility of each legislator to provide information and assistance to the people in their district. The following are examples:

- If a person has a complaint about something a state official, agency or department has done, or not done, the information may be taken to the representative or senator in the district. Legislators will help constituents with government "red tape" by telling them which department, program, bureau or official can handle a problem and how to deal with procedures.

- Legislators spend a great deal of time talking with people who have ideas for better laws or better ways for the state government to do something. In the process legislators can explain why a law says what it does, or why they voted on a particular matter in the General Assembly as they did, or what the constituent must do to have a law amended. Explaining what reasons the General Assembly had for favoring, or not favoring, something a constituent cared about is an important part of educating people in a district about state government and decisions made in Hartford. Legislators are the most direct link residents have to state government. Members of the General Assembly relish an opportunity to discuss lawmaking and government with students who will be voters someday. And spending time talking with adult constituents is absolutely necessary if a legislator wishes them, as voters, to re-elect him or her.

II. GETTING ELECTED TO BE A LAWMAKER

The 1965 Constitution sets out the conditions for serving as a legislator in Article Third, as amended by Article XV in 1980.

> For both the House and Senate a candidate must be at least eighteen years old and be an elector (or registered voter) residing in the district from which he/she hopes to be elected.
>
> Legislators who win election to the House or Senate may not hold any other state or federal office during their term(s) in the General Assembly.
>
> Elections to the General Assembly are held in even-numbered years, so all legislators serve two-year terms. There are no limits on the number of terms a legislator may serve.

The two major political parties are the organizations through which a person who wishes to be elected to the General Assembly most often will work. Though a few decide to run for a seat as an Independent (without any party label), most candidates are active members of either the Democrat or the Republican Party. As election time comes close, usually in July of even-numbered years, each party will hold a convention, or caucus, for its members in the district. In those meetings the party members will discuss possible candidates for each elective position. Sometimes they will agree on one person to be the party's nominee, in which case that person will be listed on the final ballot prepared for election day in November. If several people in a party decide to run for a position, their party will hold a closed primary (a mini-election by members of the same party).

In a closed primary the only people who may vote are those who are enrolled members of the political parties. Enrolling means a person has officially listed his name as a party member with the local registrar of voters prior to an election. (See Article Sixth of the Connecticut Constitution on qualifications of electors, and Amendments IX and X.) When a party member goes to the polls on primary day, he/she must declare the party of which he or she is a member. Each person is then given a ballot with only the names of people running for office from that party. Once the members in a party give a majority of votes to one of the candidates, that person's name will appear on the November ballot as the nominee of the party.

Independents have their names entered on the November ballot by a challenge primary. To win a place on the ballot through that method, a candidate must have received at least 20% of the votes in a party nominating convention. If he is a candidate for a Senate seat, he must also file a petition signed by 350 registered voters of that party; a candidate for the House of Representatives must file a petition with 100 signatures.

Each party nominee for legislator and any Independent candidates will campaign very hard before election day in November to convince the voters in a district to choose him or her as the person best able to represent them in the House or Senate, and all the candidates will talk about what they can accomplish for the district if elected. Campaigning gives the voters an important opportunity to tell the candidates what they need and want. It also gives the candidates the opportunity to suggest what kind of lawmakers they will be if they represent the district in the General Assembly.

III. ORGANIZING FOR THE BUSINESS OF LAWMAKING

As soon as legislators are elected, they are caught up in the job of organizing the General Assembly. This is done along party lines, with the two major parties, which represent the great majority of members in the House and Senate, controlling the process.

Leadership

The first step for the legislators in each party is to join other party members in a caucus, or series of meetings, in which they work out who will be their leaders in the two houses. The party which elected the most members to the House or to the Senate will hold the majority leadership positions. The party which elected fewer members will hold minority leadership positions.

In the Senate the Lieutenant Governor is the President. The duties of that office are to:

- preside over the Senate,
- recognize members wishing to speak,
- put all questions to vote,
- decide questions of order, and
- refer bills to committees.

In the event of a tie vote, the Lieutenant Governor may cast a vote to break the tie.

The President Pro Tempore is elected by the Senate from the members of the majority party. He/she will preside over the Senate in the absence of the President. He/she is also officially responsible for appointing the members of the Senate to their committee assignments, though many of these decisions are worked out in the party caucus.

The Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the Senate are elected by the respective party caucuses. They serve as their party's spokesperson in floor debates.

In the House the Speaker (or presiding officer) is elected by the members, and is therefore a member of the party which elected the most representatives. The Speaker's duties are the same as those of the President Pro Tempore in the Senate. In addition, the Speaker may appoint Deputy Speakers to assume those duties in his/her absence.

The House Majority Leader and the House Minority Leader are elected by their respective party caucuses and serve as the party spokesperson during the floor debates.

Each party caucus will elect Deputy and Assistant Leaders to help with the party's work in both the House and the Senate. The caucuses will also elect one or more members to act as party Whip, an old term from our English Parliamentary traditions, meaning a party official designated to assure attendance of members at voting time. It is still the Whip's job to make sure members are present when their vote is needed, as well as to check on their attendance at other crucial times.

See Appendix B for the names of majority and minority leaders in the 1995 session. Other officers and their duties are listed in *CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE GUIDE, 1995*, p.136-p.137.

Rules

At the start of each session the two houses will adopt a set of rules for conducting their business. Most of these have been set by precedent (adopted by members of General Assemblies in the past and continued in practice). Those rules and any new ones are voted on by the Senators for the Senate and by the Representatives for the House. Joint rules are the responsibility of a Joint Rules Committee. They deal with work the two houses do together, including procedures used by the Joint Standing Committees. When debate and voting take place on the floor in either house, *MASON'S MANUAL OF LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES (1989 edition)* provides the basic rules. Once the committees begin meeting, members of each committee will vote on the rules for doing the work of that committee. For the rules of the 1995 Session See *RULES AND PRECEDENTS of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF CONNECTICUT, 1995.*

Committees

In addition to selecting the leadership for the Senate and the House, each party caucus will discuss which members may be appointed to serve on committees of the General Assembly. Usually each legislator will serve on three or four committees during the two-year term, and they may be re-appointed or assigned to other committees if they are re-elected.

The Connecticut legislature is one of the few in the U.S. that is organized with a system of Joint House and Senate Committees. That means each committee has members from both the House and the Senate. Because they are appointed by the leadership in each house, the numbers are in proportion to the majority and minority parties.

The Joint Committees operate year-round, meeting as needed to study proposals for legislation. The members read background reports, technical documents and the legislative history relating to a proposal. Then, especially while the General Assembly is in session, committees hold hearings at which experts, agency officials and any interested person may give testimony or make comment on specific bills. All committee hearings are open to the public. Most are scheduled during the weekday, but when an issue is very controversial, a committee sometimes schedules evening or Saturday hearings to accommodate people who cannot attend during working hours. A verbatim record (word-by-word transcript) is kept of all the testimony given before a committee so the full Assembly will know exactly what was said by the spokespersons at the hearings.

Following public hearings, the committees are responsible for deciding what will be a good (or effective) law, which bills can pass the Assembly, what might have to be changed in a proposed bill, and which proposals must be rejected. Those decisions are then conveyed to the full Assembly in the form of committee recommendations for floor debate and action.

At present there are seventeen Joint Standing Committees divided into two groups.

Group A:	Group B:
Appropriations	Banks
Education	Energy and Technology
Environment	General Law
Finance, Revenue and Bonding	Labor and Public Employees
Government Administration and Elections	Insurance and Real Estate
Judiciary	Human Services
Planning and Development	Public Health
Transportation	Public Safety
	Commerce

See Appendix B for responsibilities of each Committee and the members serving on them during the 1995 session.

Since they are Joint House - Senate Committees, two chairpersons are appointed for each, one by the Senate President Pro Tempore and one by the House Speaker. Generally the two chairpersons alternate presiding over meetings and hearings. If members of the two parties disagree on final reports or recommendations, members in the majority and in the minority will submit separate reports to the full Assembly.

As issues have become more complicated, a committee may delegate the tasks of hearing particular proposals and recommending action to a small group of its members sitting as a subcommittee. Again, the members who sit on those represent both the House and the Senate, as well as the political parties in proportion to their numbers. Those subcommittees are temporary and give their reports and recommendations to the full Standing Committee which appointed them.

The deadlines for favorable reports on bills from the Standing Committees are set up in the official schedule. They vary for each committee but in general are during March and April of each session. At that point the bills and resolutions which are reported favorably start on the steps for action by the full Assembly. The other bills that came before a committee but were either rejected or not acted upon will die. Bills are not carried forward by a committee from one session to the next. Those that were rejected by a committee or allowed to die must be re-introduced and start at the beginning of the process at each new session.

In addition to the Standing Committees, there are several other classes of committees. These are listed below with a brief description. For more information about them see Appendix B.

Select Committees. These are joint committees which deal with areas of special concern to the General Assembly. The members are appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

At present there are two:

- Select Committee on Housing
- Select Committee on Children

Both are more permanent than subcommittees because they have been established by vote of the Assembly but, like subcommittees, they report bills they favor to the appropriate Joint Standing Committee.

Statutory Committees. These are permanent joint committees established by statute and charged with specific responsibilities.

- **Joint Committee on Legislative Management.**
  This is the "administrative arm" of the General Assembly. It is responsible for coordinating and supervising all legislative, operational and staff activities, the expenditure of all funds appropriated for the legislative branch, and the security, use and maintenance of the Capitol, the Legislative Office Building, and the grounds.

- **Joint Committee on Executive and Legislative Nominations.**
  This is the nominating arm of the Assembly. All executive and legislative nominations that require action of either or both houses are presented by this committee, with the exception of judicial nominations and nominations for the office of Commissioners of Workers' Compensation.

- **Joint Committee on Legislative Program Review and Investigations.**
  This is the "watchdog arm" of the General Assembly. Established in 1972, this Committee has greatly strengthened the capacity of the legislative branch to review how the programs, agencies and departments of the executive branch are implementing the laws. The comprehensive reports from this committee are available to the public and recommended as a resource for teachers.

- **Special Committees** are appointed to perform a particular task and then are disbanded. Similar to ad-hoc committees, there are Joint Special Committees, Senate Special Committees, House Special Committees, Committees of Conference (appointed to reconcile differences between a House and a Senate version of a bill) and special Interim Committees, which are appointed to examine a particular issue in the interim between sessions.

Technical Offices

Under the Joint Committee for Legislative Management there are four offices that provide technical services legislators need to do their work thoroughly and efficiently. All have full-time staff and all are non-partisan.

- **The Office of Legislative Research**
  - assigns one or more researchers to assist the Standing Committees (except those dealing with fiscal matters) by providing technical information and helping to develop legislation;

- responds to requests for information from individual legislators and committees, preparing written reports, oral presentations, and the *OLR REPORTER*, a newsletter on a range of legislative issues;

- prepares a bill analysis in simplified English for each bill favorably reported by committee before it is sent to the full House or Senate for action. The analysis may include a summary of what the bill would do or require, important legislative history, and a count of the votes in each committee which considered the bill;

- publishes the public acts of a session after it adjourns, codifies them, revises the Connecticut General Statutes and publishes them biennially.

• **The Legislative Library**
- collects and organizes a vast amount of informational materials for the use of legislators and legislative staff;

- provides telephone, walk-in and computer reference services to both Connecticut and out-of-state legal and legislative data bases.

• **The Office of Fiscal Analysis**
- carries out financial research and analysis for the Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee;

- reviews budget requests, analyzing the cost and benefit implications of proposed legislation;

- recommends sources for funding, including federal aid.

• **The Legislative Commissioners' Office**
- provides bill-drafting services;

-checks all bills reported favorably out of committees for consistency of language, technical accuracy, relation to exisiting statutes, and constitutionality.

Publications

A critical part of the process for organizing the Assembly is to make sure all the members receive daily communications about bills, committee hearings, meetings, and all other events going on during the session. Each legislator receives the following publications:

• The House or Senate journal is placed on the desk of each member each session day. It summarizes the preceding session.

• The legislative bulletin is also issued every day. This announces public hearings, committee meetings and other items and events of interest.

- The calendar for each house gives the list of bills reported out of committee and ready for action on the floor.

- Files are copies of bills before the Assembly. They will change as a bill goes through the legislative process. They will show the chamber in which the bill originated, the number given at the First Reading, committee(s) to which it is referred, and the number of votes in the committee(s) for and against recommending it for action. In its final version the file will include "Approved by the Legislative Commissioner" and a summary of the bill in plain English prepared by the Office of Legislative Research. The Files are the crucial publication by which legislators can keep track of the status of each bill.

- A Committee Action Report is published at regular intervals during the session by each Standing Committee.

- A legislative record index, including a subject index, is published at the end of each session. It lists the title, sponsor and number of each bill, the committee to which it was assigned, and any action taken on it by the Assembly.

In addition to those publications, copies of which are available to the public, copies of bills before the House or the Senate may be obtained in the Bill Room.

In the Bill Information Room the current status of any bill can be called up on computers. And every day information about meetings, hearings and other events can be seen on the television monitors in the halls of the L.O.B.

Although not under legislative management, but another important source of research services and information, is the State Library. Across Capitol Avenue from the Legislative Office Building, it offers assistance to the public as well as all three branches of government. Especially helpful is its "quick bill information service" available by phone and computer while the General Assembly is in session.

IV. THE PROCESS OF LAWMAKING

[Note to teachers: Offered at the beginning of this Section are three teaching tools which may help students understand what happens at each step of the lawmaking process: a chart, a list of Seven Steps in Lawmaking, and "How to Track a Bill in the General Assembly." Use them as appropriate. Students need to know certain terms they will hear legislators use to describe steps in the process. Some of those are defined on a list beginning this section; others are on the teaching tools, or are underlined and explained in the text.]

Students often ask why lawmaking takes so much time. One reason is that each step is mandated (legally required) either by the 1965 Constitution or the Rules and Precedents of the General Assembly. There are no shortcuts. Every bill proposed demands careful investigation by many people, thoughtful debate about changes offered by many individuals and groups with different perspectives, research into technical aspects of a bill and its fiscal consequences, setting priorities, and finally developing compromises that will be acceptable to a majority in both houses.

Charts and lists look "dry" to a class, but the process they describe is dynamic and driven by interactions between all kinds of people with all kinds of motives. Teachers are encouraged to develop appreciation for that side of lawmaking by facilitating as much as possible a variety of contacts between students and people involved with lawmaking at every step.

Terms

Bills are proposals (or ideas) for legislative action which are in some stage of the process.

Acts are bills that have been passed by both houses and sent to the Governor for his/her action.

Laws are bills that have passed both houses of the Assembly and have been either signed by the Governor or not vetoed within the time prescribed by the Constitution. The laws are now "on the books," and will be codified, or put into appropriate sections of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Bipartisan means there is representation of the two major parties in equal numbers.

Nonpartisan means a group or program that does not reflect the views of any political party. If there is nonpartisan support for a bill, that means the people who favor it do so apart from party considerations and want to appeal to wide public support.

Scheduling refers to the time and sequence for introducing legislation in either house for a reading or final action. According to the joint rules, the members of each committee decide when this will be done for bills they recommend for action but in practice the leaders of both houses often influence the timing through the committee chairpersons. Most bills are placed on the calendar for both houses. That indicates when action on the bill on the floor of the House and the Senate may be expected.

Placing a bill on the consent calendar means there is general agreement about it so it will be passed quickly, without debate.

A few bills may also be passed quickly by the use of emergency certification. This will happen when both the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House certify in writing that an emergency makes quick action necessary. In those very few cases, new subject matter may be proposed, deadlines in the rules will be set aside, and the legislature can take immediate action.

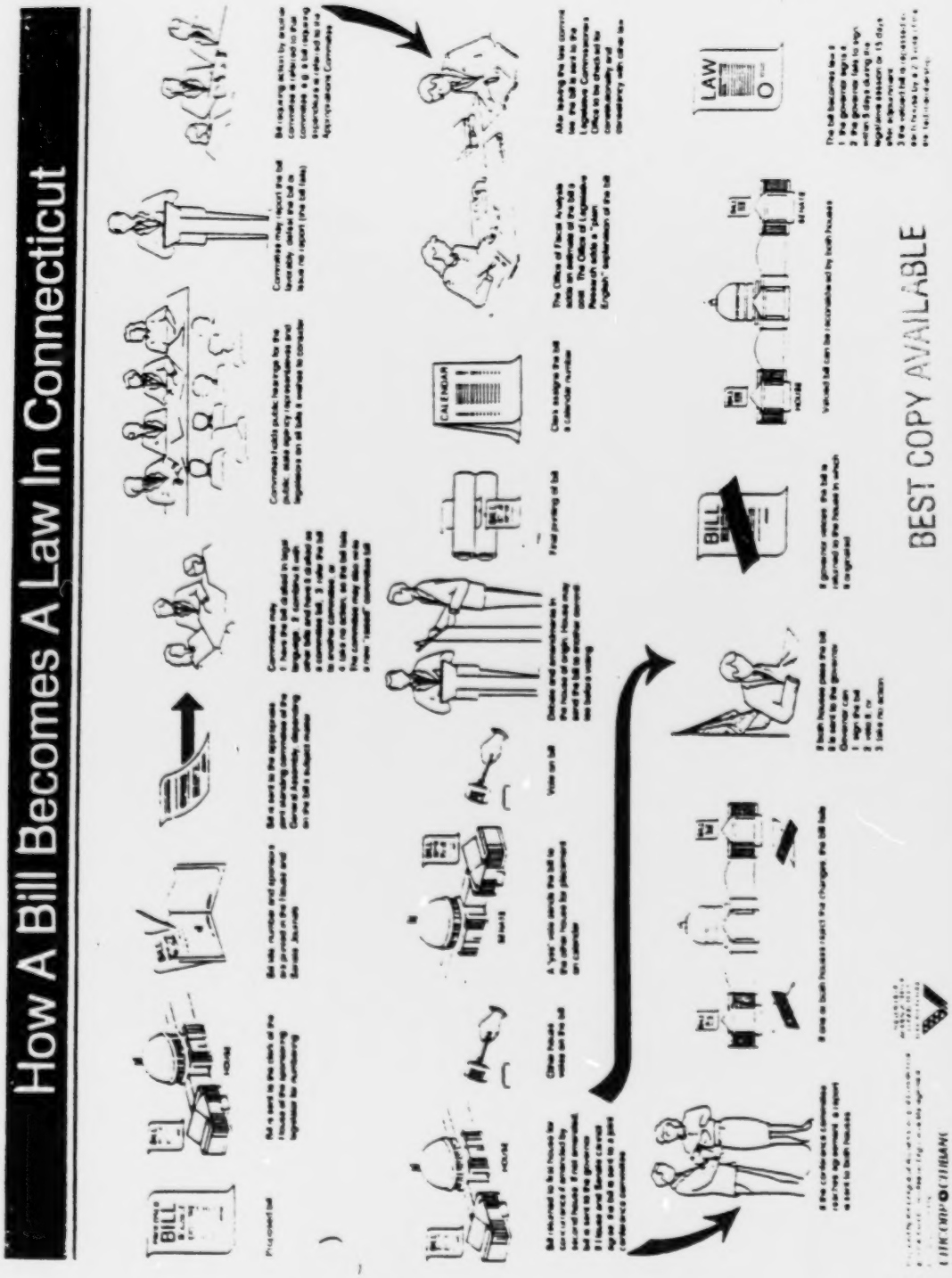
Amendment means a change, addition or deletion to a proposed bill. Refer to the chart and the "Seven Stages" to see where amendments may be made in the process. Amendments are voted on one at a time before a vote is taken on the entire bill. After all proposed amendments have been either approved or turned down, the bill "as amended" will be accepted or rejected. Sometimes so many amendments are made that a committee will re-write the bill. It is then called a Substitute Bill, keeping the same number as the original, but adding "Substitute" to the title (for example, Substitute HB 5001). The original sponsor(s) may keep their name(s) on the bill, or, if they do not approve of the changes, other sponsors will be listed.

If a bill "as amended" or the substitute bill is passed in one house, it is then sent to the other house. If the second house amends it in other ways, it must be returned to the first house. Because houses must adopt an identical version of a bill for it to pass, if the first house does not agree with the amendments of the second house, a Committee on Conference is appointed by the officers of each house. Usually three members are appointed from each house, including legislators who have voted on both sides of the issue. This is an ad hoc committee, meaning a temporary one which is assigned one particular task. The members will try to work out a compromise version of the amended bill for both houses to consider. There may be further amendments and several Conference Committee meetings before a final version acceptable to both houses is worked out. At this Conference Committee stage especially, very considerable skills in discussing, negotiating and compromising on the part of both the leadership and the members in each house are essential. If this process of amending, re-wording and voting on different versions of a bill still does not result in agreement by both houses, that bill dies.

Teaching Tool

1. CHART

The chart which follows and the description of the Seven Stages in Lawmaking are brief summaries of a complicated process. At the end of this Section is How To Track A Bill which students may use if they wish to follow one particular bill as it moves through the process.



from the CONNECTICUT CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK, League of Women Voters of Connecticut, The Globe Pequot Press, Old Chester Road, Chester, CT 06412, c. 1987

2. HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW - Seven Stages in the Lawmaking Process

STAGE ONE: Drafting and Introduction
Proposed Bill Drafted
Introduction in the House of Representatives*
First Reading in the House
First Reading in the Senate
Bill title, number, and sponsors printed in House and Senate Journals

STAGE TWO: Committee Consideration
Bill Referred to one or more of the Joint Standing Committees
Initial Committee Recommendation
1) "Box Bill" take no action - bill dies
2) Incorporate proposed bills into Committee Bill
3) Write new bill (Raised Bill)
Public Hearings for Committee and Raised Bills
Committee Action on Bill
1) Report favorably
2) Report unfavorably
3) No Report
Second Reading: Favorably reported bills sent to House

STAGE THREE: Second Committee Action
Bills requiring funding referred to "money committees (Appropriations, Finance- Revenue-Bonding)
Money committee (s) approve or reject bill

STAGE FOUR: House Action
Third Reading: Debate and Amendment on floor of House
House votes on amended bill

STAGE FIVE: Senate Action
House-approved bill sent to Senate for second reading and placement on calendar
Third Reading: Debate and Amendment on Floor of Senate
Senate votes on amended bill

STAGE SIX: Conference
Unresolved differences between House bill and Senate bill considered by Conference Committee
Compromised Bill sent back to House and Senate
If one or both houses reject compromise, bill fails
If both houses accept compromise bill, it is sent to Governor

STAGE SEVEN: Action by the Governor
Bill becomes law if Governor signs the bill, or he takes no action within five days during legislative session or fifteen days after adjournment of the Assembly
If Governor vetoes bill, it is returned to House in which it originated. Bill passes if each house repasses by two-thirds vote of elected membership. Failing two-thirds vote, veto is sustained.

*For the purposes of this summary, the bill is introduced first in the House of Representatives. Bills may also begin in the Senate.

Publication and Effective Date of Acts.
Public acts, those affecting the state statutes, automatically take effect on October 1 of the year in which they were passed unless stated otherwise in the act. The Legislative Commissioners' Office is responsible for printing all public and special acts and preparing them for incorporation into the body of state statutes.

from LAW-MAKING IN CONNECTICUT: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Wayne R. Swanson, Connecticut College, New London, CT, c. 1984, p. 80-81.

3. HOW TO TRACK A BILL IN CONNECTICUT

I. PROBLEM

a) What specific problem(s) does the bill address?
b) How can the problem be broken down? (For example, the problem of air pollution could break down into different sources of the pollution, different consequences of pollution, variety of factors that influence its presence such as industry, traffic, etc.)
c) What possible solutions can be considered, both non-political ones and legislative action?
d) Which groups and individuals express concern about problem?

II. MOVING THE BILL THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE

a) Proposing the bill

1. Who drafted it? How was the issue or problem stated and what solution did the original bill propose?
2. Who proposed it in the General Assembly and to which chamber?
3. Who supported it? What arguments in favor appeared in public speeches and/or the press?
4. Who opposed it? What arguments against appeared in public speeches and/or press?

(First Reading - formal title, number and sponsors printed in journals of the House and the Senate)

b) Committee/Public Hearing on the bill

Once the bill is referred to one of the standing committees,

1. Which of the standing committees handled the bill? What did the committee or committees decide to do with it?
   - •Who was in favor of that course of action? Why?
   - •Who was against it? Why?

Bill may die here if a majority of committee members vote against it.

2. If the committee held public hearings on the bill,
   - •Who testified in favor? What reasons were presented?
   - •Who spoke in opposition? What reasons were presented?
3. Was the original bill changed as a result of the hearings? In what ways? For what reasons?
4. If the bill required an appropriation, what did the Appropriations Committe decide to do? For what reasons?

If there was strong opposition to the bill for financial reasons, it might die here.

5. Legislative staff functions - What were their recommendations to the committee?
   - •Did the Legislative Commissioners make any changes? Why?
   - •What did the Office of Fiscal Analysis say about the bill?
   - •What did the Office of Legislative Research say about the bill?
6. What final decision about the bill was made by the committee?
   - •Was it recommended for action by the full Assembly? Or did the bill die?
   - •Reasons?
   - •Any recommendations for scheduling?

c) Action by House and Senate

1. At the Second Reading of the bill what calendar number was assigned to it? When did it appear on the calendar for daily sessions? (It must be listed twice.)

•At this Reading who spoke in favor of the bill? Reasons?
•Who spoke in opposition? Reasons?
•Were amendments proposed? By whom? What changes would these make? Who opposed the amendments? How did the members vote on each amendment proposed?

2. At the Third Reading of the bill with amendments was there further debate on the floor of the House? the Senate?
   •Who spoke in favor? Reasons?
   •Who spoke against? Reasons?
   •Did these debates produce different versions of the bill in the two chambers?
3. How did the House of Representatives vote on the bill? How did the Senate vote?
   •If one chamber rejected the bill, it died. Which chamber?
   •If both chambers voted in favor on the same bill, it was sent to the Governor for his action.
4. If the House and the Senate passed different versions of the bill,
   •What were the significant differences?
   •What reasons were given for the differences?
   •Who was appointed to the Special Joint Conference Committee?
   •Did that Conference Committee reconcile the differences? If they reached agreement on a revised version of the bill, it was returned to both chambers for debate and vote. What happened to the bill in each chamber?

   -If an identical version of the bill passed both chambers, it was forwarded to the governor.

   -If either chamber failed to pass the revised version of the bill, it died.

III. ACTION BY THE GOVERNOR

a) Did the governor sign the original bill or the revised version when it reached his desk? If so, it is the law.
   Did he/she make any comments at the time?
   Which office in the executive/administrative branch will carry it out?

b) Did the governor allow the bill to become law without his/her signature? Why?

c) Did the governor veto the bill? What reasons were given in the veto message?

If the bill is vetoed, it is then returned to the chamber in which it was proposed. Did that chamber vote to override the veto by the required 2/3 majority?
   •If it did, the bill is then sent to the other chamber.
   •If the second chamber passes the bill by a 2/3 majority also, it is the law.
   •If there was not a favorable 2/3 majority vote in either chamber, the bill dies, and those who wanted it will have to begin the process over again at a later session.

KEY PLAYERS IN LAWMAKING

The Governor Goes First

The major event that formally opens the process of lawmaking is the annual governor's address to the General Assembly. This is an impressive occasion and gives the governor his opportunity to let the legislators know what his agenda and priorities are. Called the State of the State message, it sets the tone and major directions for action by the legislature during that year's session.

A budget message follows in February, during the first session after an election. At that time the governor presents a full-scale two-year budget since Connecticut uses a biennial system for the budget process, as well as for election of legislators. In non-election years the governor will present an accounting on the budget to the General Assembly, but will not suggest major changes.

The budget the governor presents is a centralized one. It lays out for the legislators what are anticipated expenditures by all executive branch departments and agencies, and the cost of the governor's legislative program, as well as the possible sources of revenue. The work of gathering and coordinating the mass of fiscal information and doing the necessary cost/benefit analyses is the responsibility of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). Once the budget is prepared and the governor has presented his reasons for his tax policy and expenditure proposals, the budget belongs to the legislators. The General Assembly may accept it as a whole, in part, or not at all.

Consideration of the proposed budget is first referred to the Appropriations Committee and to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. Then it follows the steps for all bills, and once it is adopted by both houses, it is considered the legislature's budget. At that point the governor may approve the entire budget bill or may disapprove of any single item while accepting the remainder of the bill (the line item veto). See Appendix D for charts showing FY1995 budget.

The governor's success at getting legislative proposals and the budget passed by the General Assembly depends on a number of factors. One is partisanship. A governor is the leader of his political party in the state. If that party has a majority in both houses, the chances are good that most of his/her proposals will become laws and the budget will not be substantially changed. If, however, the opposing party controls either or both houses, the governor's ideas and plans may be rejected or greatly changed by the legislators.

The governor's knowledge of the legislative process, his skills at persuading, explaining, negotiating and compromising, and even personal relationships with individual legislators, are other factors that will help to convince lawmakers to pass what he has proposed. During the sessions much of the governor's time and his staff's as well, is spent working with the leaders of the House, the Senate and the committees. Members of the executive branch also use every possible means to explain the governor's program to the general public, for they must show the legislators there is strong, vocal support for the proposals from a wide cross-section of individuals, groups, organizations and businesses throughout the state.

Lawmakers, Lobbyists, the Media and the Public

These people also exert powerful influences on which bills become laws and what they will provide for everyone in the state. The key people are the legislators because they make the final decisions; but the lobbyists, the media and public are crucial as informants, advocates, and persuaders. Interactions between individuals and groups are constant and constantly changing during the days and weeks of a session. The dynamics are influenced by many factors. Personalities, priorities, and partisanship are some; ambition, experience, skills for working through the legislative process, and alliances based on either common needs or personal friendships are others in a kaleidoscope of relationships. The best charts and models cannot do justice to this side of the General Assembly; nor can the best laid plans always determine final outcomes. Compromises, quid pro quo arrangements ("you vote for my proposal; I'll vote for yours"), and informal negotiations are among the factors that keep the end results from being predictable. But the democratic process is people working out their own laws, and since 1639 Connecticut people have done just that in their General Assembly.

Legislators

Lawmakers are asked to consider hundreds of bills in each session. For example, in 1994 over 5,000 were submitted to the General Assembly, and all had to be acted upon in some way before the session ended. In addition to the governor's legislative program, bills come from many individuals and groups who say "there ought to be a law..."

Bills can be suggested by:

- individual legislators or committee members
- constituents
- local, state, or federal administrative agencies
- interest groups and citizen activists
- news report
- court decisions
- opinions of the Attorney General
- blue ribbon panels or special task forces
- legislation and government activities in other states or the federal government

Bills may be proposed in either house, **or filed**, any time before the opening of a session and for a limited time thereafter. In the "short session" (even years) individual legislators may file only **fiscal bills** (bills having to do with public funds). The committees, however, may propose any bills on any topic.

Proposed bills need not be in formal legal language when they are introduced. They may be just ideas about how to solve a problem. When a bill is given its first reading in either house, it is assigned a title, a number, and a legislator who is named its sponsor. The sponsor then guides the bill through the steps outlined in the teaching tools. Some bills have only one sponsor; others have many. Sponsorship is a way by which other legislators may judge how important a bill is and, therefore, what priority to give it. One powerful legislator's name on a bill may be enough to convince others to look at it seriously; when a number of legislators put their names on a bill, that shows there probably is wide public support for it.

Once a bill is filed and has its first reading, leaders in the house receiving it refer it to the appropriate committee or committees. The broad areas of committee jurisdiction are set in the Rules (see Appendix B); but party politics and priorities can also influence which committee receives a bill and where it is scheduled on the committee's agenda. At that point a bill is the committee's responsibility. Its members may decide to reject it, to amend it, to substitute another bill for it, or to forward it with a favorable recommendation to the house in which it was originally received.

During the early committee phase (from the start of the session until the deadlines for committee reports in March or April), legislators work very hard on their assigned committees. Meetings, hearings, and informal discussions consume at least 2/3 of a lawmaker's hours. Added to that is the time spent studying the files, other publications and relevant technical information, talking with people interested in particular bills, the press and lobbyists, and attending floor sessions.

After bills are referred by the committees to the House or Senate, the time for major action on the floor of each house begins (second and third readings). Then the lawmakers focus on listening to reasons to vote for a bill, or reject it, or to ideas about how to amend it. Most legislators select just a few bills on which they will actively work and speak, either for or against. No one can be an advocate on every issue. They choose those that are important in their district, or are a priority for their party. But because the public also expects them to be well informed and "vote intelligently" they will spend long days, and sometimes nights, listening, discussing, negotiating, studying and, finally, deciding "yea" or "nay" on most major issues. A voting record that they, or their party, can explain to the public and relate to needs and priorities of their constituents is what they were elected to accomplish. To do that, legislators must be people of extraordinary dedication, energy, and skills.

Lobbyists

Students have the most questions about lobbyists and what they do. A lobbyist is a person who is designated (or hired) by an organized group, business or special interest to represent its views to the legislators and to try to influence the way they vote on a particular bill. In that way lobbyists, too, are key players in the legislative process. They are usually paid by the particular group they represent, but they can also be unpaid volunteers who have a strong interest in or knowledge about a special area of legislation, such as the environment or women's issues.

Lobbyists in Connecticut are carefully regulated by laws and rules of the General Assembly. There is a Code of Ethics that they must follow, and a State Ethics Commission which enforces it. All lobbyists must register with the Commission before January 15th of each year, telling what organization(s) they represent, what they are being paid, and in what areas of legislative action they will lobby. Each lobbyist must wear an identifying badge while in the General Assembly, and may not be on the floor of the House or the Senate while either is in session, though they may sit in the gallery with the public to watch the debates and count the votes. In addition, they are required to file monthly reports with the Commission while the Assembly is in session, including a statement of each expenditure of $50 or more that was given by the lobbyist for the enefit of a public official, his/her staff, or immediate family. Lists of the registered lobbyists are published and open to the public. Those tell which company or group uses

the lobbyist and what is his/her area of legislative or administrative activity. Some lobbyists make a full-time career out of working for several large businesses, but most represent only one organization, or groups in one field.

In reality lobbyists provide a valuable service to legislators who, faced with a mass of bills, haven't time or staff for adequately researching the details in proposed legislation, or in a particular problem area. They are the most helpful when they explain complicated problems or technical issues related to their group or business. Information they give may change the vote of legislators, or it may change provisions in a bill being proposed. Therefore, they are important participants in the lawmaking process.

Lobbyists also have an important function when they keep their interest group well informed about what the legislators are doing. In general, busy businesspeople and interested citizens do not have time or expertise to study complex issues and to follow the day-to day procedures by which a bill is changed into a law. Lobbyists do that for them, even at times helping to stir up public opinion when they believe a vote should go one way or another. Letters and phone calls to legislators generated by lobbyists and the organizations that use them may exert a powerful influence on votes in committees or on the floor of the House or Senate.

Regulations of the State Elections Enforcement Commission prohibit all solicitation and donations of political campaign contributions from lobbyists and the Political Action Committees of their corporations or organizations during the legislative session. No candidates for the legislature may receive political contributions from lobbyists during the session except for candidates involved in a special election held during the session to fill a vacancy in a district for the House or Senate.

The Media

The press and media are crucial sources of public knowledge about the work of the General Assembly, and one of their major functions is generating informed public debate about issues and proposed legislative solutions. Fifty to sixty full-time reporters cover each session. They work out of the press room in the Capitol, which is maintained for them by the Office of Legislative Management. Through them daily accounts about what is happening in the General Assembly fan out across the state by way of television, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Legislators also actively use the press and media to inform the public and to generate debate on issues before the House and Senate. Besides making frequent public statements, they keep in constant touch with their constituents by every possible means, from press releases to "Letters to the Editor," to radio talk shows and televised meetings. Especially during a session, exchange of information and opinions is an ongoing three-way process in which the press, legislators and local constituents share their concerns and views. Local people tend to talk about local problems, but the media and the legislators will tell them about what is going on at the state level in the Assembly committees and hearings, and about votes on the floor. Therefore, both legislators and the media tend to put local issues into a statewide context. Through their broader perspective they help to make citizens more effective as participants in the work of the

General Assembly. That is why listening, reading, discussing alternatives, and communicating are such critical skills for everyone - legislators, media people and citizens involved in the lawmaking process.

The Public

The role of the public as a key player in lawmaking is more readily understood by students than what lobbyists or even the media do; and it is the area in which students themselves can have a direct influence. One of the goals of this program is to encourage them to do that, to show them the points in the process where they can make a difference, and to develop skills they need to participate effectively. Section V which follows gives some "how to" suggestions. But teachers can help them by emphasizing first that there are different levels of public involvement in legislative procedures and, second, that effective participation requires some specific skills that can be learned through class activities and experience with the realities of lawmaking.

The public sets the process on track by voting. When the voters choose who will represent them in the General Assembly, they directly influence its majority/minority party balance and the program priorities, as well as the kind of people who will carry through the steps of lawmaking procedures. Voting is a privilege, not a requirement or even a right, in the American political system. Those who choose to exercise that privilege need to have the basic skills to learn about candidates, to listen to them, and to decide between them. Through the legislators they choose, the voters are the people who influence how each General Assembly does its work.

When the General Assembly begins the lawmaking process, the public also has choices. Some people stay uninvolved, passive, indifferent. But there are also many opportunities to be actively involved. Among those are talking with legislators, reading and listening to reports from committees and floor debates, giving testimony at hearings, and writing government officials in both the legislative and executive branches. Demonstrating in front of the Capitol is another kind of participation, and students will remember such dramatic examples as the crowds that gathered to protest the state income tax, or the motorcycle riders who protested the helmet law. The sight of a big crowd may be electric, but the lasting effects of such one-shot actions are hard to assess. Demonstrations certainly call attention to an issue about which certain segments of the public care a great deal, but more thoughtful expressions of public opinion are often more influential. A demonstration that is followed up by letters, person-to-person contacts with legislators, or testimony at public hearings is more likely to influence how a particular law is written in the end.

Again, students should understand that it takes a range of skills to do that effectively. Among those are organizing information and people to support a position, considering alternative solutions, and deciding what an individual or a group can reasonably justify. Then a person has to be able to articulate the position clearly, whether in a speech, a letter, or in informal conversation. Becoming influential citizen advocates takes time, work and "know how." But those are the active spokespersons for public opinion who make the most difference in what lawmakers decide to do with bills as they move through the legislative process.

Staff of Technical Offices

In contrast to the partisan, very public roles in lawmaking played by the governor, legislators, lobbyists, the media and the public, the role of staff in the Legislature's Technical Offices is a nonpartisan one played out mostly behind the scenes. Yet those men and women are also key players in lawmaking because they provide crucial technical services through each step of the process. Because most legislators have neither the time nor the expertise for the highly detailed work of formal law-writing, staff work can often make the difference between a good law and a bad one.

In general a good law is clear in its intent, is a reasonable response to real needs, is coherent and well organized, and is enforceable. Three of the Technical Offices contribute substantially to achieving those results. (Refer to the list on p. 22 & 23 of this manual.) From the beginning of the process by which a bill becomes a law, staff in the Offices of Legislative Commissioner, Legislative Research and Fiscal Analysis work with individual legislators and with the committees, assisting with a variety of specialized services from bill drafting, to research reports, to fiscal information.

The public is usually not aware of all the necessary tasks staff members do, but when a bill has been favorably reported out of committee and is prepared for action in the House and Senate, the work of staff members is clear. At that point the bill is printed up for the files with the following information:

- It has been approved by the Office of Legislative Commissioner. That means attorneys have checked the bill for consistency and correctness of legal language, accuracy of technical data, its relation to existing statutes, and its constitutionality.

- The series of File Numbers printed at the top will show what changes the bill has undergone as it went through the chamber where it originated, the committees to which it was assigned and where to trace earlier versions in the files. Further, for purposes of debate and amendment, each line of the bill is numbered. That information is also the work of the bill-drafting services of the Office of Legislative Commissioner.

- At the back of each bill is a Fiscal Impact Statement from the Office of Fiscal Analysis. It begins by reminding legislators that it has been prepared "solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation." It does not "represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose." Impartiality is one of the reasons the Technical Offices are so useful to legislators.

- The Fiscal Impact Statement also shows which levels of government will be affected if the bill is passed, giving figures for the State and for the Municipal impact, and stating which State Agency(s) will be involved.

- The Statement closes with an Explanation of Estimates. It is written in clear, concise English and gives the busy legislator the key figures and statistics.

- Also on the back of each bill is a bill analysis prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Research. Written in plain English, the analysis gives a summary of the key provisions of a bill, its effective date, some legislative history on the issue, and the number of yea/nay votes in each committee which acted on the bill.

DECIDING WHICH BILLS WILL BECOME LAWS FOR CONNECTICUT

The last stage in the lawmaking process draws together all of the key players in a climatic series of decisions. On one level these decisions are made in accordance with a set of parliamentary actions controlled by strict, legal rules, precedents and procedures. On another level the final decisions are a constant balancing of considerations by each legislator: considerations for "the common good," for political priorities, for the need to compromise. And mixed in is an infinite variety of individual motives: ambition, desire to please constituents, need to do a favor, personal likes and dislikes, among others.

The final process begins when committees report favorably on a bill and technical staffs have finished their work, and the bill file has been printed and circulated. It is then placed on the calendar for action (Third Reading) in the chamber in which it originated. That is itself a crucial decision and is usually made by the leadership. Though committee recommendations for scheduling may be considered, more important factors for working out the final calendar are the priority given a bill by the majority party, whether and how many amendments might be made from the floor or whether there are enough votes to pass it as is, and what the other chamber is likely to do with the bill. If a bill is placed on the calendar for early action, it is more likely to be fully debated before being voted on. Bills that are put toward the end of the calendar are at risk of being bundled together for a rushed vote at the end of the session, or being allowed to die even though they had public hearings and favorable reports from committees.

The next step is a motion made by the Speaker or the President Pro Tempore for a bill to come before the House or the Senate. After that formality, debate may begin and so may the amendment process. Proposals to amend a bill must be filed with the clerk of the House or Senate before the day on which the bill is to be acted upon, and they must be germane (directly related to the substance and specific provisions in the bill). Each amendment must be debated and voted on as it is proposed. It cannot be amended, nor can a substitute amendment be offered, until there has been a vote on the one being debated. At this stage several things may happen.

- If no amendments are offered, and the members have voted to close debate, the bill is put to a yea/nay vote. If a majority says "nay," the bill is dead. If a majority says "yea," the bill is sent to the other chamber for action there.

- If amendments are proposed, debated and accepted, they become part of the bill "as amended." (At that point an amended bill may be:)

  - sent to the Office of Legislative Commissioner for review. If it is approved, it is reprinted as amended and returned to the floor for the yea/nay vote.

- or referred back to the committee(s) because it is so changed, a new one has to be written.

- If debate on amendments, or on a bill itself, is taking up too much time, the members may vote to limit debate.

- If so many amendments are proposed, or debate on a bill becomes too controversial, the members may vote to postpone it for consideration at another specified time, or to place it at the end of the calendar.

If a bill is passed by a majority in one chamber, it moves on to the next step - the debate/amendment/voting process in the second chamber. Here, again, several things may happen.

- If an identical bill is passed in the second chamber, it is sent to the governor for his/her decision.

- If a different version is passed in the second chamber, a Conference Committee is set up to try to resolve the differences and work out a bill which both chambers can pass. A bill can become law only if both chambers pass identical versions.

- If the Conference Committee succeeds and the compromise bill is passed by both chambers, it is sent to the governor.

- If the Conference Committee cannot negotiate an acceptable compromise, the Committee 's negative report with the bill is returned to each chamber. There the members vote to accept or reject the report of the Conference Committee. They cannot amend it.

    - At that point members in one chamber may vote to reject the negative vote of the Conference Committee, and decide to refer it back to the Joint Standing Committee which originally recommended it for further work.

    - If both chambers accept the negative report of the Conference Committee that no compromise could be reached, the bill will die.

At each of these steps public debate in the House and the Senate, like the amendment process, is controlled by strict rules. There are a number of formalities which every member must follow when speaking on the floor, and the required rituals often seem stilted and overly rigid to an observer in the balcony. But it must be remembered that these are ways of keeping intensely held opinions within orderly limits and giving a fair hearing to all sides. As in a trial where the goal is for truth to emerge through an advocacy system, the goal of debate is for a majority of legislators to become convinced that "the common good" lies with a particular course of legislative action.

It is by listening to legislators in both reasoned debate and informal discussions outside the chambers, and by hearing the cheers for the "yeas" or the "nays" when they win an important vote, that an observer realizes how deeply committed members of the

General Assembly are to their role as decision-makers. Political decision-making, whatever formalities are required, is a tremendously competitive, exciting, absorbing process, with real winners and losers. But those who lose out on one vote know the process is still open for another try, and all the key players are in place to provide attention, communication and support.

THE GOVERNOR HAS ONE MORE CHANCE

Once the "yeas" have it in both chambers, and an identical bill is sent up to the governor, he/she has a second turn at influencing the legislative process. Like the legislators, he and his staff follow bills through the process with great care, and they pay a great deal of attention especially to what the media and the public have to say. Furthermore, the executive branch has the same expert technical services which the General Assembly has, plus its own departments and administrative agencies. And the governor is the state's political leader as well as his party's chief. Still he must stay within the options allowed to the executive branch by the state Constitution and the Rules of the General Assembly.

When the governor receives a bill, these are the options. He may:

- sign the bill, thus officially making it a law;
- refuse to sign a bill, but must do that within 5 days after it has been received, or within 15 days after the General Assembly has adjourned. In that case the governor has decided to let the bill become law but without the approval of the Chief Executive.
- veto the bill and return it to the General Assembly, giving the reasons why he believes the Assembly must reconsider its action.

THEN THE ASSEMBLY HAS THE FINAL DECISION

After it receives a veto message from the governor, the Assembly has these options.

- A 2/3 majority in both chambers may re-pass the bill over the governor's veto. That makes it law in spite of his/her objections.
- Legislators in either or both chambers may decide they agree with the governor's objections, so it will be extremely difficult to build the required 2/3 majority to re-pass the bill. Without that majority in both chambers it will die.
- If the governor vetoes a bill after the Assembly has adjourned, the Assembly still has the power to act. The 15-day rule means a pocket veto is impossible in Connecticut. (An executive fails to act on a bill if he receives it after the legislature has adjourned - "puts it in his pocket".)

A Connecticut governor must send his veto message and the bill to the Secretary of State within 15 days. The Secretary will then reconvene the Assembly for the sole purpose of re-considering it. Action on it is taken first by the chamber in which the bill originated. If it is repassed by a 2/3 majority, it is send to the second chamber. Again the 2/3 rule applies. If the bill does not receive 2/3 yea votes in the first chamber, it dies and the second chamber takes no action. Both chambers must vote by 2/3 to override a veto. This is commonly called a trailer session, and may not last more than 3 days.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

The State Constitution mandates a specific date for adjourning the regular sessions of the General Assembly. Article III, Sec. 2 as amended in 1970, says the legislature must end its regular business:

- in the odd-numbered years (long session) not later than the first Wednesday after the first Monday in June; and

- in the even-numbered years (short session) not later than the first Wednesday after the first Monday in May.

To make sure that the General Assembly can handle important unfinished problems or emergencies, however, both the constitution and statutes provide for calling special sessions under certain conditions.

- Article III, Sec. 2 gives the General Assembly the power to call a special session "when the members judge it to be necessary."

In this case the members must be given ten days' notice before the vote to call a special session; and a majority of the total membership of each chamber is required to approve the call, not just a majority of members present and voting (Connecticut General Statutes Sections 2-6). The specific matters to be acted upon must be made public before the voting. Then the Assembly must adjourn when that agenda is completed. No new items of business may be introduced.

- Article III, Section 2 also says "the person administering the Office of Governor may, on special emergencies, convene the General Assembly." Furthermore, a governor, faced with an emergency, may call the Assembly together at a place in the state other than Hartford.

In this case both the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate must certify in writing that there is truly an emergency before the call for a special emergency session may go forward.

-The Connecticut General Statutes (Sec. 2-6) give the governor the power to call a special session even when there is no emergency. Again, the item(s) to be acted upon must be stated specifically by the governor, and members of both chambers must vote to hold such a session. If they do not wish to hold the session, they may simply gather and vote to adjourn.

In this case there may be significant political considerations for the governor and the legislators. For instance, Governor Rowland supported calling a special session to consider issues related to gambling in Connecticut 1995. This is a good example of the reasons in favor of calling a special session: the time and attention of members in both chambers would be focused entirely on a major, complicated problem which has many ramifications for the whole state.

Recently opposition to such a special session came from the Mohegan Nation, the Mashantucket Pequot Nation and from some segments of the general public. A number of members of the General Assembly also spoke out in protest. They agreed the governor had the statutory authority to call for a special session not related to an emergency. But they believed all regular business of the Assembly ought to be dealt with in the time allotted for it in the constitution and issues related to gambling should wait to be brought up at the next regular session.

V. DO YOU THINK THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW...?

Here is what to do:

ORGANIZE. A group is more effective at working for or against legislation than an individual. It is more visible, has greater resources, and shows there is more public interest in an issue or problem. Call together a group of friends, co-workers, or neighbors and talk with them about a specific issue of concern to all of you.

Such a group should think carefully about whether legislation (with the politics involved) will solve the problem, or whether other alternatives might work better. Remember, laws will not solve everything, and sometimes have unintended consequences that create other problems.

After you as a group decide what you want to do, agree on a plan with a goal and a schedule to accomplish it. Decide on specific tasks to be done, such as researching available materials, finding data that supports your position, attending meetings of other groups concerned with the problem, and talking with people outside your group who may be affected by what you are proposing. Some may support your plan, but some might oppose it and you should know their reasons.

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATOR if you believe there should be a law. Here are some steps to take.

Get in touch with the legislators in your district. This may be done individually or as a group. If you know someone who can introduce you, person-to-person contact may be helpful. When you call, write or talk in person with a legislator, it is not necessary to identify your political party or whom you voted for in the last election, but you should always identify yourself by name and address and your group.

Be courteous, stating your views clearly and listening respectfully to the legislator's responses. Avoid any hint of high-pressure tactics with the lawmaker, and never accuse him/her of having already made up his mind, having a hidden agenda, being biased, or not leveling with you. Sarcasm and threatening to withhold support are not effective strategies in this context.

Arrange a meeting to tell your legislator about the problem that concerns your group and what you are proposing. At the meeting don't waste time with a long, emotional presentation. Have your facts well organized and persuasive. Wherever possible, have pictures, charts or graphs that clearly demonstrate your points. If you have done your research thoroughly, you can be a helpful source of information on a complex problem. If there is already a law or a bill dealing with the problem but you consider it to be wrong or ineffective, have your data ready to explain what you believe will be a better approach, but show the legislator you know what has been tried, and your specific suggestions for changing it have valid reasons as well as strong public support. And be

prepared to listen thoughtfully and courteously to what the legislator has to say. You may find he/she is already supporting your position or has information about a bill you didn't know. In any case, show you appreciate his/her time and attention, and are ready to report any suggestions he/she offers to your group. Don't present arguments against the legislator's course of action at this time, and don't ask for a commitment that he/she will vote the way you want.

Write a letter to your legislator. This is the best way to follow up a meeting and influence him/her. Here are some tips:

- Be sure the letter is addressed correctly including the legislator's full name, all the words are correctly spelled, and your name and address are on the letter.
- If the letter comes from a group or organization, give its full name and address, and if several people from the organization add their signatures, note any official titles (such as President or Secretary) they may have in the group.
- Use your own words instead of sending a form letter or petition. Those are often the products of pressure campaigns and are not nearly as influential as a thoughtful letter which reflects sincere concerns and facts that have been carefully researched.
- Begin your letter by expressing appreciation for the time your legislator took to meet with you. Then summarize briefly the matter discussed and what your group proposed.
- If you can, identify by number the bill being considered with which you are concerned, giving its title and the subject matter. Then go on to suggestions for changes your group would like to see. You may suggest specific wording for amendments, though these need not be in legal language.
- Give reasons for your position, keeping them as clear and specific as you can - such as the effect a bill will have on your family, your job, your community.
- Be brief. Legislators do not have time to read pages of data and arguments. Many issues are complex, but an outline of specific problems, solutions and reasons can be clear and persuasive.
- Finally, tell your legislator that you and your group will be tracking the bill and will appreciate his/her support.

ATTEND PUBLIC HEARINGS AT THE COMMITTEE(S) TO WHICH YOUR BILL HAS BEEN REFERRED.

- **Attending** these will provide a great deal of information about a proposed bill as well as different views on the problem about which you are concerned. Most hearings are held in the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and are open to the public. The date, time and place for a hearing must be published five calendar days beforehand in the Legislative Bulletin and, if the topic is of wide public interest, many newspapers will give that information. When it schedules public hearings, a committee usually arranges for bills that deal with the same topic to be presented at the same time so everyone concerned with that area of legislation can be present if they wish.

- On the day of the hearing, the place and time can be checked on the Television monitors in the LOB halls. It will help to know the number of the bill you are interested in before the hearing, That information is available both through your legislator and through the Bill Information Service at the LOB and the State Library. When you get to the hearing room, you may pick up a copy of the bill(s) being considered in the hearing from a rack outside the room. Study that material carefully so you will understand testimony being given and the comments of the committee members.

- Committees as well as individual legislators encourage public participation in hearings. Like letters and calls they receive from interested people, what the public says about a problem and the proposed bills that deal with it are very important for helping members decide what to do with legislative alternatives. But, unlike letters, a hearing gives those who attend what is often very knowledgeable testimony, a sense of who is in favor and who is opposed to the solutions being considered, and the reasons for a variety of positions.

Giving testimony at a hearing is the most direct and effective way of getting your views "on the public record." All testimony is recorded so committee members and all other legislators will know what you have said. Here are some suggestions:

- Plan what you want to say so your points, facts and reasons are clear and concise. Committee members have a great deal to accomplish in a hearing, and may become inattentive if you "go on and on." Usually it helps to write out what you plan to say. If you do that, stick to your script, and give copies of it to committee members (and ten extras for staff and your own representative and senator).

- Find the committee room about one hour before the hearing is scheduled and sign up to give testimony. There will be a sheet just inside the door; there you can write your name and the bill on which you will be speaking. At that time review the copy of the bill (on the rack outside the room) to see whether there have been any amendments which you would want to address in your testimony.

- At many hearings the first hour is reserved for legislators, agency representatives and special experts invited by the committee to give their testimony. Listen carefully and make notes while they are speaking. They may give information about the bill or the problem you did not know.

- When you are called, sit at the speaker's desk and speak slowly and clearly into the microphone. Formal address is appropriate to start: "Mr." or "Madam Chairperson" and "Members of the Committee". Introduce yourself, giving your full name very distinctly so it will be clear on the tape. Give your address, including your town, and the number and title of the bill on which you will speak.

- Also tell the committee whether you support the bill, oppose it, or are offering suggestions to amend it. Then explain the reasons for your position with supporting facts.

- Be brief. Time limits for verbal testimony vary, but most committees allow only 3 minutes for a public statement. In any case, do not go over the time set by the chairperson at the start of the hearing. During your verbal testimony you may demonstrate your points with charts and graphs, but only if the chairperson gives permission. And don't get "bogged down" in explaining details. The "visuals" should be few in number, and should emphasize your main points. More may be included with your written testimony.

- If earlier speakers have already covered some of your points, you may say you agree with their remarks, or support their position. Then use your time to emphasize points or facts not covered by others.

- If you strongly disagree with previous speakers, you may make that clear, but do so with respect and courtesy. Then go on to give facts and data that support your views.

- When you have finished your testimony, you may close with an offer to answer any questions the committee members may have. If there are questions, answer them clearly and concisely, giving additional facts to support what you say, but keep your responses short and to the point of the question asked.

- When your presentation is finished, thank them for the time and attention. You may tell them and your legislator that you and your group will be tracking the bill and will appreciate support for it.

- Though your spoken presentation must be brief, committees welcome written testimony which may be longer and include more information. Each committee decides the number of copies needed for its members so you should ask for that information ahead of time. Then add ten extra copies for the committee staff as well as your district representative and senator. Have the copies ready to hand to the chairperson or the clerk when you leave the speaker's desk.

VI. EXPLORING CAREERS AT THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Studying the General Assembly in class may encourage students to explore careers in the legislative branch, and the visit will give them a chance to talk with both those who have political jobs and those who hold one of the staff jobs. For background information, students may talk with their local legislator about what kind of duties fill their time during the session, as well as what has to be done the rest of the year. They can also study the Committee Staff Manual. That is available free from the Office of the Joint Committee on Legislative Management. It explains the staff positions at the Assembly in detail, with special focus on how staff people serve the committees, the legislators and the Assembly.

There are several possibilities for a students to explore a political career:

- With the permission of a legislator, a student may "shadow" him/her for a day or two during the session.
- A student may volunteer to help one of the parties or a candidate at election time.
- Student volunteers may help in a legislator's district office while the session is going on. Work on mailing lists is always appreciated, and so is gathering information or polling public opinion about an issue on which the legislator is taking action.

Any of those activities will give students a realistic notion about the time, effort and kind of people involved with partisan political work.

Full-Time Staff Jobs at the General Assembly

Nonpartisan staff positions at the Capitol and the LOB are under the over-all direction of the Office of Legislative Management. Most require skills (secretarial, administrative, research, or technical), and a high degree of efficiency. These are full-time, year-round jobs, and especially during the sessions staff people work very long hours. Some are assigned to work in the offices of the leadership; others provide technical and support services, dealing with numerous requests for assistance from legislators, committees and the public.

Staff in the following offices are particularly busy during sessions:

Legislative Commissioners Office
Office of Fiscal Analysis
Office of Legislative Research
Legislative Data Processing Office
Legislative Library
Legislative Publications Office and the Bill Room

Between sessions the staff do many "follow-up" tasks to complete the work of the General Assembly. They prepare reports and publications that go to legislators, to appropriate government agencies, officials and departments, and to the public. They continue to work with the leadership of the House and the Senate and with members of the standing committees, and assist the public with everything from touring the building to doing research in the Legislative Library.

Interim Jobs

In addition to the full-time positions, there are some part-time or interim jobs. These are filled by staff people employed to work only during a session, or to prepare detailed studies requested by a committee or the leadership. The positions usually require a special appropriation to pay the salary because they are outside the budgeted resources of the Office of Legislative Management. For that reason, there are few of them, and they usually go to specialists with the technical expertise needed to complete a particular assignment.

Internships

For students who wish to explore either political or staff careers in more depth, there are some internships available. A few are open to high school students, and the local representative or senator will help with information about those opportunities. Most internships in the General Assembly are given to college students who are majoring in Government or Political Science. They are appointed and supervised by the Joint Committee on Staff Internships.

Interns may be assigned to a committee or to one of the technical offices, where they work under the supervision of the regular staff. An intern may also be assigned to work for a legislator in one of the leadership positions.

Teachers may make arrangements before the Legislative Visit for students to meet with staff members or with interns who hold particular positions in which they are interested. But remember, these are very busy people and students should be prepared with specific questions to ask. For example, they might want to know:

- what training is needed;
- what are the most interesting aspects of the work - and the least;
- what are opportunities for career advancement;
- what is the pay scale.

When completing the form for the CCLCE Visit, note only those staff positions that students are seriously interested in exploring. Have them ready with their questions, and on time for any planned meetings. Let the students know, however, that a meeting with a staff or an intern might have to be cancelled at the last minute if there are unexpected demands on staff time or a change in schedule.

SENATOR KEVIN B. SULLIVAN

DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

State of Connecticut
SENATE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591
FAX (203) 240-0208

For Thomas Jefferson, education was the foundation of civic responsibility. Therefore, democracy is most at risk when the governed or those who govern lack the knowledge and experience necessary for the informed and active debate that sustains citizenship and our sense of shared community.

Informed and active citizenship means understanding how politics and government work. That's why participation in the Legislative Visitation Program is so important -- helping teachers and students become better informed about how "We the people" express and determine public policy through the legislative process. That very human process of conflict, competition, compromise and consensus is the heart of American democracy.

Through readings, classroom discussion and on site visitation with our legislators at the State Capitol, the Legislative Visitation Program offers teachers and students an invaluable understanding and appreciation of the values of representative democracy and democratic citizenship.

Best wishes,

Kevin B. Sullivan

Kevin B. Sullivan

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